

Referendum FAQ

This document is provided by Gaza Solidarity Encampment, for use by SGA.

1. What is a referendum?

A referendum is a voting process in which every student can participate. Every student at Middlebury can participate in this referendum. The referendum is open until midnight on Thursday, May 9th. SGA and Encampment Representatives will be located in dining halls and all around campus to answer student questions during this time frame. Please stop by if you have any remaining questions!

2. Why is the referendum important?

Your vote directly influences the Board of Trustees' decision to pursue divestment. The Board of Trustees will meet this Friday. Although the administration has made certain commitments, the Board of Trustees ultimately has jurisdiction over the endowment and divestment. **In 2018, the referendum on fossil fuel divestment was THE turning point in requiring the College and the Board of Trustees to commit to the Energy 2028 plan.** This referendum, like the one in 2018, is crucial, and its outcome will shape our future commitments. The urgency and relevance of this issue cannot be overstated.

3. Why is there still a referendum even though agreements have been made as a result of negotiations? Is the Encampment satisfied?

We appreciate the school facilitating negotiations and the agreements we reached. However, the cause of Palestinian justice is not over! The board of trustees is the ultimate decision maker, and we need all the information we can get to negotiate with them regarding divestment.

4. Why divest from war profiteering?

No money for war and occupation! We have made a document outlining the steps we believe the Board of Trustees should take to divest from [war profiteering](#). Using [Investigate](#), you can look through the list of companies that profit from war. It is important to note that Middlebury is behind many institutions in divesting from war profiteering. Many other institutions already have transparency on where their money is invested. Because we don't yet have financial transparency, we do not know which of these companies we are currently investing in. Once students are allowed to hold the endowment accountable, they can begin working with the Board of Trustees to divest.

5. Why divest from Israeli businesses?

[Israel is an apartheid state](#). Money is power—there is no end to apartheid without divestment. US direct divestment from companies in South Africa in the 1980s was one of the main reasons that South African apartheid fell. In 1986, South African Middlebury College students also worked tirelessly to make our college one of the 155 colleges in the country to divest from that oppressive regime. **Let's do it again!**

6. What do we know about Middlebury's investment in Israel Apartheid?

So far, we know that \$600,000 from the public holdings of Midd's endowment (which makes up only 20% of their holdings) is directly invested in Israeli Apartheid. Through transparency and pressure, we hope to uncover the private holdings' investment and hold the Board of Trustees accountable for divestment. An example of what this looks like is the [University of Michigan's Tahrir Coalition](#)'s report. They uncovered deep ties between the Israeli military-industrial complex and the university's endowment.